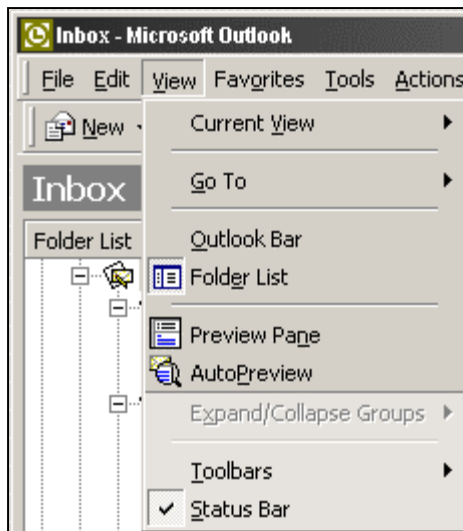


Security Quickie 1-6-03: Preview in Outlook

Using the Preview or Auto-Preview Pane in Outlook 2000 can be a convenient way of quickly discovering what an email message refers to. Unfortunately, these two functions can also automatically open certain types of email viruses or launch unintended applications without any assistance from the user. Two examples of this are the Zoher worm in December 2001, which could infect unpatched Outlook systems, and more recent email messages that, when opened or previewed, would launch Internet Explorer and visit unintended websites. The best way to mitigate the security risk of these two functions is simply to turn them off, at the very least in the Inbox folder.



To turn the Preview and Auto-Preview Pane functions off in Outlook and Outlook 2000 Inbox, highlight the “Inbox” folder, go to the “View” tab on the menu bar, scroll down to “Preview Pane” and “Auto-Preview” and make sure both are unselected. By doing this, you eliminate the auto-preview risk and can judge yourself whether or not you want to open a potentially malicious message, such as a message from an unknown source or one with an unexpected attachment.

The new Outlook 2000 does not currently have the preview options turned off. It is very important that individuals take a few moments to turn them off, because in doing so you are not only protecting your own email account, you are helping to protect the State of Iowa’s Outlook as well.